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TRIALS

"One Sick Assassin"

It was Arthur Bremer's show all the way—just as he had planned. For a solid week he was the undeniable center of attention in a crowded courtroom in Prince George's County, Md. Pleading not guilty on grounds of insanity to the shooting of George Wallace, he smirked, joked, guffawed and occasionally stuck out his tongue as a parade of psychiatrists commented on his schizoid personality. His most dramatic moment came when a diary he had kept while stalking Wallace was read in court; he was so proud of it he had hoped to sell it to Time Inc. for \$100,000. It exposed the eerie inner world of the full-time loser determined to become "number one" by carrying out fantasies of violence. Though it seemed the handiwork of a madman, the jury took only an hour and 35 minutes to find Bremer sane—on narrow legal grounds—and guilty. In Maryland, to be judged insane a person must be unable to control his criminal behavior or unable to appreciate the criminality of his act. Bremer, as the diary makes clear, was all too well aware of what he was up to. When he was sentenced to 63 years in prison, he said that the prosecutor wanted society "to be protected from someone like me. But in my defense, I would sure like it if society had protected me from myself."

Written as he zigzagged about the U.S. and Canada trying to assassinate first President Nixon and then Wallace, the diary, replete with sometimes revealing misspellings, shows a deranged, crippled half-man in quest of his own destruction through that of another:

APRIL 7. New York City. Got a limosine for \$11 an hour (Nixon was in one today). I always carried my gun outside my hotel. I really felt good being stare at by the poor people. Took a taxi to the Waldorf Astoria and never got looked at by anyone.

APRIL 8. New York City. I decided to go to a massage parlor. I looked up their ratings in *Screw* newspaper, checked the ones I wanted and was going to 3 or 4 that night. I couldn't do it. I walked past a place and then got lost (on purpose maybe). I felt like I was going to get raped. Called the best place for a reservation and was told, "You just come in, sir."

APRIL 9. New York City. Bremer

TIME, AUGUST 14, 1972

finally goes to the massage parlor. I picked out the blonde. A hairy character said, "Alga, you have a $\frac{1}{2}$ session in studio 2." She led me into a room, locked it, turned the lights out and lit incense [sic]. Piped in music began. I handed her 3 tens and said we'd have to take it easy as I just ate lunch. I took off my vested business suit and overcoat and layed on my stomach, nude. I started some talk about a burglar alarm that was ringing and was ringing for the last 2 days. We talked about the weather.

I glided my hand over her back and side and rear for a closer inspection. "You're not supposed to do that." "What?" "Touch me." "Why?" "That's the rules." "Are you kidding?" I was thinking that she would be a thief not to return a part of the \$30. But she kept it & complaimented me on my suit. I told her it was lousy (just a disguise to get close to Nixon. I wouldn't wear a ugly thing and spend \$70 plus for it for any other reason). She opened the door & I left without looking back, a mistake, a great mistake in my lifetime. Thought I'm still a virgin. I went to the West Side Airlines Terminal. I had to meet Nixon in Ottawa by the 13th (his arrival). The trip was lousy. A fat boring sheltered snob of a theoloogy student talked nonstop with a equally sheltered and fasinated high school student. I waited 30 minutes for dinner & when I got it, last in the whole plane, we had turbilence & the "fasten seat belts" sign went on.

APRIL 10. Bremer drives from Milwaukee to Ottawa. At a Wisconsin gas station I asked each station attendant if he heard anything about Nixon going to Canada. No, they were to busy to read a paper. They must of smelled too much gasoline & it ruined their brains. *He crosses into Canada with weapons hidden in his car.* I instantly lost all respect for the Big Bad Canadian Customs. Could of had enough guns to start a revolution and 12 pigmyes to carry it all on their heads. I did over 90 once or twice—danger gave me an erection.

In Ottawa, Bremer waits, a revolver in his pocket, for Nixon's motorcade to pass. Fantasied killing Nixon while shooting right over the shoulder of that cop. Everyone moved in close. He went by befor I knew it. Like a snap of the fingers. I had missed him that day. A woman, middle-age, gave me an anti-war anti-Nixon leaflet. You stupid bitch, stop this useless accomplish-nothing form of protest, let the security slacken & I'll show you something really effective. Tons of leaflets have been handed out all over the world for years & what did they get done?

While standing outside the U.S. embassy, Bremer watches a Mountie photograph a group of noisy demonstrators. He should have photographed the quiet ones. Never pointed his camera at



BREMER (FOURTH FROM RIGHT) STALKING PRESIDENT NIXON IN OTTAWA



MICHAEL COOKE



TV FILM OF BREMER SHOOTING GEORGE WALLACE

AT A WALLACE RALLY IN WHEATON, MD.

me. I thought about killing as many SS men as I could. Something to show for my efforts, right in front of Nixon.

I saw what I thought to be the President's car. I went immediately to my hotel to get my gun. I stupidly took time to brush my teeth and change my suit. When I arrived back, the car was gone. Does the world remember if Sirhan's tie was on straight? That night Nixon went to a concert in his honor at the performing arts center. To wear white tie & tails & get Nixon—boy, Wow!

APRIL 24. Back in Milwaukee. This will be one of the most closely read pages since the scrolls in those cave. I want something to happen. All my efforts and just another goddam failure. My fuse is about burnt. I've had it. I'm tired of writting about it, about what I was gonna do, about what I failed to do. What I failed to do again & again.

MAY 4. Milwaukee. Saw "Clockwork Orange" and thought about getting Wallace all thru the picture. Fantasizing myself as the Alek but without "my brothers." Just "a little of the old ultra violence." I've decided Wallace would have the honor of—what would you call it? It seems I would have done better for myself to kill old G-man Hoover. In death he lays with Presidents. They

never heard of Wallace in Russia or anyplace. Editors will say: "Wallace dead? Who cares." If something big in Nam flares up, it'll end up at the bottom of the first page. He won't get more than three minutes on the network T.V. news. The whole country is going liberal. I can see it in McGovern. The radio commercial says you've got a lot to live. Yeah, a week. Funny, I got nothing to say. Have I ever said anything?

MAY 7. Milwaukee. Yesterday I even considered McGovern. I have to kill somebody; that's how far gone I am. It bothers me that there are about 30 guys in prison now who threatened the Pres & we never heard a thing about 'em. Maybe what they need is organization. How about a "Make the First Lady a Widow, Inc." or "Chicken in Every Pot and Bullet in Every Head, Inc."?

MAY 8. Milwaukee. I am one sick assassin. Really would feel better if Michigan had a death penalty. How will I spend my time in my little cell? I'm gonna get convicted. Similar to Sirhan.

MAY 14. Kalamazoo, Mich. One day before shooting Wallace, he writes the last words of his diary: My cry upon firing will be "A penny for your thoughts." Copyright 1972. All rights reserved. Arthur H. Bremer.